



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

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August 20, 2019

Honorable Patricia A. Serpa, Chairwoman
House Committee on Oversight
101 State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairwoman Serpa:

Please accept the attached report as the State's most recent update on the RIBridges system, which covers the reporting period July 16, 2019 – August 15, 2019. This document provides monthly updates on the following topics:

- System performance and improvement;
- DHS staffing and employee training;
- Pending applications;
- SNAP timeliness and lobby/DHS Call Center summaries;
- CCAP off-cycle payments;
- Correspondence with federal partners and Special Court Master

We appreciate your continued advocacy on behalf of those we serve, your interest in the health of the RIBridges system and the progress made to address outstanding issues. As always, please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CE Hawkins".

Courtney E. Hawkins, Director



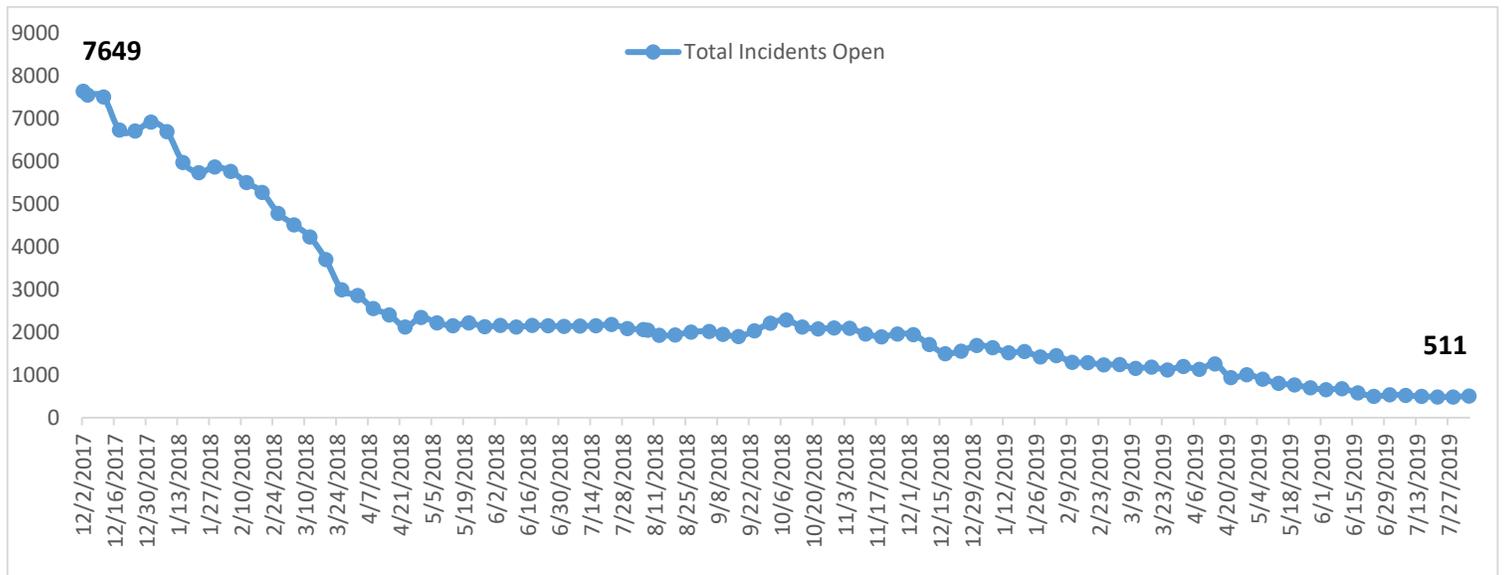
RI Bridges: Monthly Update

August 2019

Our team takes its charge seriously in promoting health, nurturing quality of life, and being there for Rhode Islanders when needed. Our oversight of work on RIBridges is an important part of the equation. With significant improvements to system stabilization under our belt, we are looking ahead to refocus our efforts on ensuring full compliance of the system. This report provides an update on our efforts and progress to date.

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE + IMPROVEMENT

Due to a focused effort on consistent and stable system operations, the number of new and existing incidents (when the system does not operate as expected for a DHS client, worker or provider) has decreased by 7,138 incidents. As of July 27, 2019, open incidents totaled 511 – a 93% drop since December 2017.



DHS STAFFING + TRAINING

Hiring Update

DHS continues to make progress in strengthening its workforce. Since this July, DHS hired ten employees who have all started in their new roles. These include:

- 6 Eligibility Technicians
- 1 Customer Service Aide
- 1 Customer Support Specialist dedicated to the Call Center
- 1 Financial Management Administrator
- 1 Clinical Training Specialist

Training Overview

Training Topic	Training Date	# of Training Hours	# of New Staff	# of Current Staff
New Hire Orientation	8/5 thru 8/7	18	9	0
Basic Navigation	8/9	6	8	0
Transfer Penalty	7/23, 7/26 and 7/29	18	0	39
Lobby Release Trainings	7/30 and 7/31	6	0	16
Rhode Island Works (RIW) Program Training	8/14 and 8/15	12	0	9
Civil Rights/Voter Registration	7/16, 7/17, 7/18 and 7/19	16 (8 – 2-hour training sessions)	0	160
SNAP Training	7/23 thru 8/2	54	0	12
Totals		130	17	236*

**Current number of staff trained is a duplicate number*

New Hire Orientation

This period we held one New Hire Orientation and an introduction to RIBridges, Basic Navigation. A total of nine new staff members attended the training.

Current Staff Overview

Over the last month, staff members were offered training in several areas. New and current staff were offered training in several program areas such as SNAP and RIW. In addition, the Long Term Support and Services (LTSS) staff were offered trainings regarding transfer penalties. The Quality Control (QC) unit was offered training on how to use the Visit Record, a new functionality in RI Bridges. Finally, the Center for Staff Development and Learning (CSDL) offered the annual training on civil rights, English proficiency and voter registration to our staff.

Workshop Descriptions

New Hire Orientation: The New Employee Orientation (NEO) Program is the first step in welcoming new hires to RIDHS. Its main objective is to familiarize new employees with the organization, its organizational structure, and its policies and procedures.

Rhode Island Works (RIW) Training: This training follows a “tell me, show me, let me try” design that allows lessons to be reinforced through a combination of auditory, visual and hands-on experiences. This means participants will have multiple opportunities to engage with key points of learning. To reflect common activities and maximize training success, the participants will be subject to scenarios which will increase in complexity.

Learning objectives:

- Overview of application and data collection for RIW and Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
- Understanding RIW and CCAP eligibility

- Comprehending how to read the Time Clock
- Interpreting the Work Employment & Training (E & T) Module
- Identifying differences between the Eligibility Technician (ET) and Employment and Career Advisor (ECA) roles for RIW
- Familiarizing yourself with sanction entering and lifting
- Documenting financial requirements for RIW and CCAP
- Interviewing for RIW
- Processing hardship applications

Civil Rights/Voter Registration Training: This training provides all DHS staff with a refresher on the processes for customers to file discrimination complaints as well as how to process voter registration information.

Lobby Readiness: This is an instructor led training. The training approach will include “Tell Me” (lecture), “Show Me” (demonstration) and “Let Me Try” (hands on practice). To increase knowledge in best practice by using the Visit Record function in RIBridges that will be included in all field offices and enhancing consistency in our processes by appreciating the customer journey. The learning objectives are as follows:

- Create a visit record in RIBridges
- Understand and describe the business process/flow of the customers’ journey
- Claim visit record, as needed, throughout the customer’s visit
- Demonstrate customer management techniques (soft skills)
- Close the customer from the visit record when visit is completed

Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) - The SNAP Workshop is designed to introduce Eligibility Technicians to SNAP program policy and RIBridges. The workshop approach combines instructor led portions, demonstrations, and hands on exercises to provide a complete integrated policy and system learning experience.

Transfer Penalty: Participants will demonstrate an understanding of the policy and business procedures surrounding transfer penalty. They will demonstrate competency in calculating a transfer penalty, understand transfer penalty exceptions and be able to complete the resource transfer screen in Bridges. Participants will understand 1) when and how to assess a transfer penalty 2) how to interpret a BDN for transfer penalty and 3) be informed of some of the challenges in working with a transfer within RIBridges.

Basic Navigation: This is a one-day course that introduces a new DHS employee to the foundational skills on how to navigate through the RIBridges system.

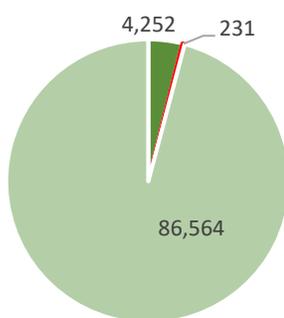
PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

The State continues to prioritize access to benefits. As August 12, 2019, the number of pending new applications across all programs is 5,026. Overdue pending applications awaiting State action total is 2,185.

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
SNAP Exp	2	24	26	3	10	13	39
SNAP Non	330	258	588	17	19	36	624
CCAP	10	155	165	5	45	50	215
GPA Burial	0	2	2	1	6	7	9
SSP	0	83	83	0	8	8	91
GPA	32	47	79	54	33	87	166
RIW	108	99	207	9	79	88	295
Undetermined Medical	23	243	266	43	557	600	866
MAGI	30	13	43	24	72	96	139
MPP	3	44	47	0	7	7	54
Complex Medicaid	22	29	51	49	142	191	242
LTSS	102	879	981	98	1,207	1,305	2,286
Totals	662	1,876	2,538	303	2,185	2,488	5,026

SNAP TIMELINESS

DHS continues to make progress in improving customer service. The timeliness for SNAP applications was 96.9 percent for expedited and 97.8 percent for non-expedited for July 2019. SNAP timeliness was 56 percent in November 2017. We have achieved more than 90 percent timeliness since April 2018.

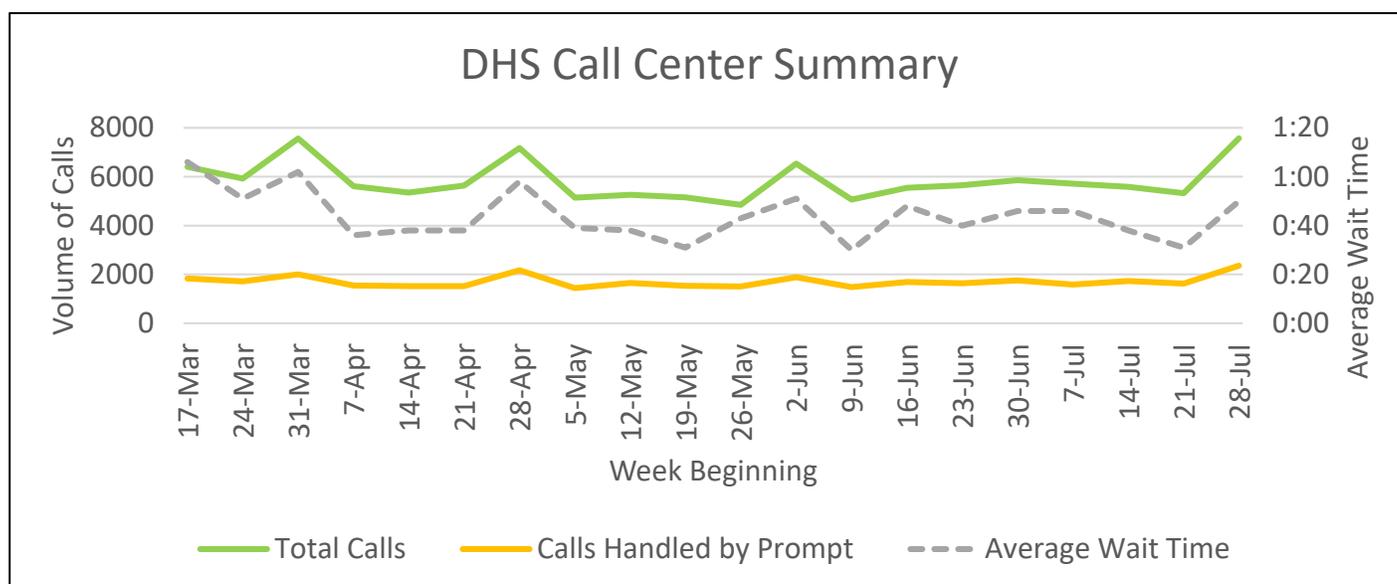


In July 2019, SNAP benefits were issued timely to more than 86,000 households. The number of applications not processed timely represents less than 1 percent of our SNAP population.

Untimely July Applications | Timely Applications | Total SNAP Population

CALL CENTER

With approximately 7,571 calls, the average wait time was just over 50 minutes. The six-week average is 41 minutes, 6 seconds.



CCAP OFF-CYCLE PAYMENTS

Below are the total number of batch payments made to child care providers between July 16 – August 8, 2019.

Note: Off-cycle 4B is abnormally high due to two large sites (YGP and Boys & Girls) having prior batches ready for approval.

Batch	Date Issued	# of Providers	Amount after Union/PAC removed
29 (3)	07/16/2019	656	\$2,833,380
29A (3A)	07/18/2019	31	\$27,087
29B (3B)	07/25/2019	42	\$49,283
4	07/30/2019	631	\$2,840,704
4A	08/01/2019	35	\$22,238
4B	08/08/2019	45	\$195,112

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (29, 29A & 29B)	729	\$2,909,750
Off-cycle (29A & 29B)	73	\$76,370
Provider off-cycle/total	10.01%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	2.62%	-

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch	711	\$3,058,054
Off-cycle (4A & 4B)	80	\$217,350
Providers off-cycle/total	11.25%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	7.11%	-

UPDATE ON RECERTIFICATIONS PROCESS

The State has verified that Medicaid renewals were appropriately initiated by the RI Bridges System in compliance with the CMS approved renewal plan.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH FEDERAL PARTNERS AND SPECIAL MASTER

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) are important partners to the State. We continue to meet regularly to review progress on RIBridges. Below is a list of federal correspondence during this reporting period:

- July 30, 2019 RI FY 2018 Error Rate Report
- August 8, 2019: Notice of Appeal from the Quality Control liability claim for the Federal Fiscal Year 2018
- August 2, 2019: Special Master's 21st report to the courts
- August 15, 2019: SNAP Application Timeliness report as part of Gemmell agreement